

providing everything from popular tales and domestic ritual upwards, and its effects on the outlook of any uncultured people must be immense. 177 [771]

Again a new period of foreign influence opened in the nineteenth century, first with the incursions of the Dogra rulers of Kashmir, resulting in partial occupation and administration, and later, in 1892, by the establishment of British general control in the rest of the country.

There are three principal languages in use in the Gilgit area: Burushaski, Shina and Khowar. Burushaski is the language of the people of Hunza Nagir, and a dialect of it is spoken by the inhabitants of Yasin. Shina is the language of the majority, current, in various dialects, over the greater part of the Gilgit Agency, as well as in Darel and Tangir to the south. It is an Aryan language. Khowar is also of that stock and is the language of Chitral. It is spoken in the western districts of Gilgit, Ghizer, and part of Kuh, and as a secondary language in Yasin. 197

How far there are to-day any definite ethnical distinctions in the population corresponding to these different languages is an open question. There has certainly been considerable mingling through intermarriage and individual migration, but there are at present insufficient data for solving the ethnological problems of the Gilgit region. When in Gilgit I secured anthropometric measurements of some 600 men from the various districts, and it is possible that if these are ever worked out by some competent anthropologist they may afford grounds for intelligent guessing. 563

The material of which I am going to make use reached me chiefly through the medium of Shina: that is, it represents the beliefs of the Shin and Yashkun speakers of Shina. To a lesser extent I shall be able to refer to corresponding beliefs existing among the Burushaski speakers of Hunza and Nagir. It is significant that the names of several of the principal Supernatural actors are different in the two languages, for this means that even if the two linguistic communities derive 121 197 771 171 ●

121 from a common racial source these supernatural beings have
 197 been long enough in the possession of each to acquire
 771 independent existence in its language. This of course
 171 probably represents an inversion of the facts. It is safer
 on the whole to assume independent origins and gradual
 assimilation through contact and social fusion.

197 It appears to me not an impossible theory that of the two
 563 great sections into which the Shina-speaking population
 174 is divided, the socially inferior Yashkuns represent the earlier
 population who probably shared the language and culture
 of the surviving Burushaski-speaking peoples, while the
 Shins were an invading and conquering race who imposed
 on the Yashkuns their language and probably took over
 from them some of their beliefs.

[582] The Khowar in the western districts is due probably to
 the extension of the Chitrali population beyond the political
 and natural borders of Chitral, reinforced by intermarriage
 which goes on at the present day, and in part to political
 domination in the past, which in quite recent times amounted
 to actual rule. Punial and Yasin are still governed by
 members of the Khushwakht family of Chitral whose mother
 tongue is Khowar.

128 In order to facilitate the arrangement and handling of the
 material with which we have to deal, it is necessary to adopt
 some system of classification of the Supernatural. I am
 not in a position to offer any scientific scheme, but a very
 rough grouping will suffice to serve our needs.

From one point of view we may regard the Supernatural
 as represented :—

1. By ANIMATE BEINGS possessing certain supernatural
 powers or qualities, e.g. demons, witches, etc.

2. By QUALITIES or VIRTUES pertaining to, or affecting
 inanimate objects, exhibited in magical or irrational processes
 and properties.

With the latter category, comprising examples of
 sympathetic and contagious magic, the working of the evil

776 I have recorded instances of human-peri marriages in Chitrāl,
 [588] but that lies outside our present beat.

RĀCH

776 The term *rāch*, cf. the Sanskrit root *rakṣ-*, "to protect," is
 778 usually applied to material objects, which exercise protective
 powers over human beings. Among such objects are included
 articles worn as talismans. It is also said, however, that
 everyone has a guardian spirit in the form of a small girl—
Rāche Mulai, or *Rāchi*. There may be two of them. These
Rāchi communicate with the *Pashū* or Anti-witch when their
 protégés are in danger.

Again, if a bad woman rides on a horse the horse's *Rāchi* is
 depressed. Here the *Rāchi* was explained as the *silāra*,
 "star" or "fortune", but it is not therefore to be assumed
 that it is an impersonal abstraction. The conception of a
 man's "luck" or "fortune" as a living being who is some-
 times asleep and sometimes awake is very common.

● [171] In a Burushaski story there are three women who are the
 "Guardians" (*rāchakūyo*) of a king of Irān. They know
 his fate beforehand and how he can escape it, but are not
 in direct communication with him. This story, however, is
 obviously of foreign origin, at least in its existing form,
 and the guardian women are an integral part of it and could
 hardly have been introduced as an afterthought.

CHÈCH

776 We now pass to a very active and vital group of the Living
 [171] Supernatural—the *Chèch*. The name is not identifiable
 as a foreign loan-word and has all the appearance of being
 good *Shina*. If I am right in believing the *ch*'s to be cerebral,
 they would ordinarily correspond to Sanskrit *kṣ* or *tr*, but
 I cannot suggest a derivation.

Chèch appear to me to present features of interest and
 originality, but they may be commonplace to the instructed
 folklorist. I shall first mention some of the chief
 characteristics and then illustrate them by specific examples.

he keeps quiet. The man has children, their appearance they say, is ill-favoured, like that of a Yaç. The Yaç lives in his house and he (Rozāli) is superior, they say, to all the Astōris in wealth. They say that the Yaç is in Rozāli's house in the skin of a cat. They say that his wife's food every seven days is 24 eggs and 2 seers (4 lb.) of ghee. This matter is publicly known to all the people. A number of Astōri people have told us this story." The wife's diet seems rather limited in kind, but bread and vegetables are perhaps taken for granted.

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YAÇHÓLO

The Yaçhólo,¹ by his name, must be some sort of cousin of the Yaç, but he is a shadowy personage whose only known interests are agricultural. Here is all the information I have about him: "At the time of the reaping of the wheat and barley, in the name of the Yaçhólo they put some mül (gruel) in a dish and carry it to some place in a field where there is a big stone and where they say the Yaçhólo is. The reason is this: they say, 'if we propitiate the Yaçhólo our wheat and barley will be plentiful.' Nowadays they do not do this in Gilgit (proper), but in Shināki places, e.g. Bagrōt, at places on both sides of the River (Sherōt, Shakiōt, and Bārgo), and at Herāmosh, in these places they do it."

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We may now pass on to the Human Supernatural, of whom the Rū.i and the Daiyāl are the chief. The term Rū.i is Şhīna. The Burushaski equivalent is Bīlas, but the word has also, I think, wider application. In Khowār the idea is, I believe, covered by the word Gūr.

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RŪ.I

The Rū.i is perhaps the most interesting of the whole Gilgit cast, and of her I happen to have particularly full

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¹ I have lately come on an isolated note: "Yaçhól, a demon like a bear."

as India. In his flights he was unconscious of mountains or other obstacles, but it is probable that like the Rū.is he must not touch water or a graveyard. 754
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The other Anti-Rū.i is the Mitrū. I am unable to give any explanation of the name. Mitūs appear to be always men. The Mitū is a more ambiguous person than the Pashū. He is professedly an antagonist of the Rū.is, but he seems to slip very easily into the rôle of aider and abettor. Ostensibly his functions and practice are similar to the Pashū's, but he appears to have less authority and less firm moral purpose. When he fails, he yields to pressure or persuasion by the Rū.is and allows himself to be used as a sort of human anvil on which the victim is dismembered, or else he himself chops him up. He still, however, retains some of his original better feelings, for he refuses to accept a share of the victim's flesh.

Some doubt is cast on the Mitū's original good faith by a statement made to me by a Pashū : that the Mitū accompanies the Rū.is carrying an axe with him ; but perhaps this imputation is due to professional jealousy.

I must confess to some doubt as to the use of the Mitū as a chopping-block. It is a curious idea and I have no actual vernacular text to support it, only notes made in English of what I understood at the time was told me.

The Mitū is unconscious when travelling on his errand of mercy, but if his foot touches water he returns to consciousness, is unable to proceed further, and returns home.

Mitūs are found in Nagir and Bagrôt, but there are none [171] ● in Gilgit proper.

It may perhaps be useful to offer a few more facts about Rū.is. Rū.is are numerous and ubiquitous in the Gilgit area. They are found in Puniāl, Hunza, Nagir, and other districts, as well as in Gilgit proper. 754
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My Pashū friend told me that in Gilgit there were some 300 of them, but this I can only take to be a gross exaggeration. I fancy he was something of a misogynist, for he also

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●[171]

informed me, with all the seriousness that the statement deserved, that there is a trace of the Rū.i in all women.

All women in fact are potential Rū.is—a truly terrible thought.

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Fortunately, in practice Rū.is are products of heredity rather than education. The potential Rū.i does not seem as a rule to pass spontaneously into the practising Rū.i, but if a woman is a Rū.i her daughter will also be a Rū.i.

As regards their external distinguishing features the infallible sign of a Rū.i is that her feet are turned backwards. This must only be when she is functioning as a Rū.i, and even then it is noteworthy that when she is in animal form the animal's feet are not reversed in this way. Rū.is' hair and clothes are said to be repulsive. Their hair stands up on end. Their mouth is red (query—with blood?) when they have been maltreating anyone and at night they vomit. People then say, "Perhaps she has killed some one to-day."

It is a very remarkable thing that Rū.is and their doings do not seem to arouse any active resentment either in the public or in private individuals. There are many women who are notorious as being practising Rū.is, but they do not appear to be subjected to any form of persecution. I have heard of no case of Rū.i-baiting.

Tests and ordeals, such as ducking, may be unnecessary where the quality of at least the most important Rū.is is known to everyone and is beyond dispute, but then one would expect that they would be dealt with summarily and drastically by the irate relatives of their victims.

The above is a dry summary of the main facts about Rū.is. It would be possible to support it by many actual instances, but that would take too much space. I will, however, quote just a couple of stories which illustrate some of the main points.

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The following is the story of a Nagir Rū.i which I recorded in English: "Two young men in Nagir one day wanted water. There was a shortage of water so they went to the head of an

ON THE FESTIVALS AND FOLKLORE OF GILGIT.

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of the former would be Shins and those of the latter would be Yeshkuns. This shows that their family system takes the mother into consideration. 101
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The Ronos are said to have come from Rajauri, a district in Kashmir, where they belonged to a ruling family of the district.

The Gujars have recently come to these parts and speak the same dialect as in India. [92]

Besides these, there is another family of the former Muhammadan rulers of the country called "Rā." They originally came from Skardu about three centuries ago, and professed to be the descendants of Alexander the Great. The inhabitants considered them to have been born of a fairy, and this idea leads the people to think that their rulers were of a superior race touching on the divine, and that therefore it was necessary to honour and obey them. [563]
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The people live very simply, and their requirements are few. Each one is himself a cultivator, a weaver, a carpenter, etc. Their dress, which they weave from the wool of sheep and ibex, includes the *skuta* (cloak), woollen pantaloons, a woollen shirt and a rolled cap. The women wear loose trousers, a shirt and a cap, with a few silver ornaments and shell brooches. They wear on their feet a kind of leather socks called *pubbo*, made either of ibex skin or of cow hide. For hill journeys they wrap their feet in pieces of goat or ibex skin which they call *thanti*. 511
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The chief amusement of the people is polo, which they play with the utmost zest, and shooting markhor, ibex and orial with their matchlocks for the sake of meat, skin and wool. 526
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The former language of the people was Sanskrit, but the dialect now spoken is generally called "Shina," though the Chitralis call it "Dangrik." It contains many Sanskrit as well as Persian words. 197

Such are the tribes to whom the folklore and customs appertain, but they have lived together for such a long period under the Buddhist and Muhammadan rulers that it is now difficult to know which of the ceremonies was originally observed by each separate tribe. 171
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THE FESTIVAL OF "SHINO BAZONO."

The advent of spring in the Gilgit country brings with it the quaint festival of "Shino Bazono," which corresponds to the English May-day. It lasts about fifteen days, beginning in the middle of February and ending about the beginning of March. An indicating that the long cold winter is at an end with all its accompanying hardships, and that spring is nigh, bringing with it warmth and life and a renewal of the scanty stock of provisions which has run dangerously low during the past months, the festival is hailed with much rejoicing by the simple Gilgit folk. In order to observe this feast rightly, the people, twelve days before its commencement, put ten seers of wheat into a wooden basin. They fill this up with water and keep the mixture wet for five days, after which they take it out and place it in a small pit dug for the purpose in the ground, over which stones are heaped. The wheat is left in this pit for four days, after which the grain is sown. 776
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*[See also p. 119 (p. 119).—BA.]

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fication. It plays a conspicuous part in the incantations of the Dainyals, and on a great man entering a Shin village a pan of burning Chili branches is waved before him. On certain occasions both men and women saturate themselves with the smoke, which is of a particularly pungent nature.

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The custom of Chili worship does not appear to have penetrated to Hunza or Nager, nor is any trace of it to be found in the Oxus Valley, in Chitral, or among the tribes of the Swat Valley; but among the Siab-Push it seems to exist in almost the same form as it did among the Shina. Chili wood, or Padam, is still taken down to the Punjab to be used in Hindoo ceremonials. According to Colonel Prejevalski, the same tree is also held sacred by the Mongols and Tartarans, who burn the branches for incense during prayer time. At Hunia Shukpa, within 20 miles of Leh, a few trees of great age exist, and are held in much veneration by the Tartars of the village, though the tree is not generally an object of Tartar respect.¹ It may be that the feeling of veneration was inherited from the Shins, whose influence must have extended nearly to Leh. It is still usual in Gilgit to sprinkle goat's blood on a tree of any kind before cutting it down.

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The religion of the whole country is now some form of Mahommedanism, and in the immense knot of mountains of which Yassin forms the centre, three different types of the same religion have met, and are now striving for the mastery. From the south, Soomsee Moollahs have carried their tenets up the different valleys with more or less success. From the eastward a current of Shiah doctrines has set in from Iskardo; and from the westward the curious Maulai, or Maglee,² tenets have found their way up the Oxus Valley. It is to be noticed that the subversion of Hindooism by Mahommedanism in the remoter valleys seems to have been extremely gradual, and to have been more owing to gradual conversion than to persecution.

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The genealogical tables of the present ruling families of Hunza, Nager, and Gilgit, enable a fair idea to be formed of the date of the introduction of Islam into the country. Tradition records the death of the Gilgit Ra with the non-Mussulman name of Shiri Buddetti,³ at the hands of a stranger bearing the Mussulman name of Azra, or Azur, from whom the present Ra of Gilgit, and the Thums of Hunza and Nager, trace

¹ Henderson's *Likiep* in *Fieldwork*, page 31.

² The common mispronunciation.

³ The meaning of the name is perhaps "Given by Sri Buddha." — Sri Buddha Shiri.

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DARDISTAN.

[CHAP. XVIII.]

D ⁵⁶⁴ might infer that they^{are}, or have been, of the Sikh caste, from
[2+2] the fact that all these customs concerning the cow, which we saw
to be characteristic of that caste, are held by these Buddhist

D Dards to an extreme degree.

177 It is curious to trace how in some respects they keep to the
[22] customs of the race they spring from, and how in others they
595 have adopted the customs of the Buddhists.⁴ There seems to be
an instance of the former case in that their headmen of villages
(at all events in the Hant Valley) are elected for three years
only, and even within that time are sometimes changed; this is
certainly a trace of the republican system, of which something will
be said in Chapter XX. On the other hand, we see them following
the Buddhist Ladakhs in the practice of polyandry, to which
they are completely given; among these Buddhist Dards a
woman has sometimes as many as five husbands.

D Their religion, I think, lies open there; they are not so
• 171 attentive to its observance as the Ladakhs are; and I do not
792 think that any of their young men are trained up to be Lamas.
744 Their dead they burn, and the bones of them they strew away in
holes in the cliff, closing up these with stones.

SCENERY NOTES.

D Leaving now the Buddhist Dards, we will note a few isolated
167 facts concerning the race generally.

It has been seen from the map that the Dards have spread,
driven by want, or by oppression, or by disturbances, from their
own countries across certain ridges into valleys that were occu-
pied by other races; in these they often live side by side with
those other races—as with the Kathangs and the Balts—some-
times in villages separate, sometimes occupying part of the same
village.

D At Dardst the Dards nearly equal the Balts; the two do not
563 intermarry. At Dardst also the two races are about half and half,
564 but here they have intermarried, and the distinctness has been
264 broken up. At Dardst and at Saptar they are of those who do not
1-7 drink cow's milk; these must be of the Sikh caste.

⁴ See *Notes on the Dards*, p. 10.